



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Army Compatible Use Buffer ceremony recognizes efforts to conserve agricultural land and open space in Harford County

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. –

On Wednesday, March 21, the U.S. Army Garrison Aberdeen Proving Ground and the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center will hold a ceremony to commemorate the joint efforts of the Department of the Army, Harford County Government, Harford Land Trust and the Hopkins family land owners to conserve agricultural land and open space in Harford County through the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program, also known as ACUB.

The ACUB Program was created to address incompatible land use and achieve conservation efforts. ACUBs establish a buffer area around Army installations to limit the effects of incompatible land use and maximize land inside the installation that can be used to support the installation's mission.

"Partnerships between the military and the communities across the fence line offer win-win solutions to the problem of encroachment. These partnerships preserve military readiness, promote effective growth strategies, and help protect and improve the natural environment," said Alex A. Beehler, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environment, Safety & Occupational Health).

An ACUB allows the installation to work with partners to encumber land to protect habitat and training without acquiring any new land for Army ownership. These partnerships are unique to Department of Defense environmental resource management and include external stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, land trusts, the conservation community, state and local governments, and commercial and residential growth interests.

"Working with the personnel from the Army Environmental Center and Aberdeen Test Center we came to realize the genuine concern the Army has for balancing their need to buffer their test facility while preserving area farmland and critical habitat in the region for future generations," said Harry V. Webster, Jr., President, Harford Land Trust.

The agreement between the Department of the Army, Harford County Government, Harford Land Trust and the Hopkins family land owners will protect 163 acres of land adjacent to ATC's Churchville Test Area. The only maintained hilly off-road test course operated by the U.S. Army, CTA is used to test the endurance and reliability of both tracked and wheeled vehicles. For the past 65 years, the steep natural grades and tight turns have taxed the chassis, suspensions, engines and drivelines of every vehicle fielded to the U.S. Army, from the M4 Sherman and M26 Pershing tanks of the 1940s to the Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles and up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles or "Humvees" of today's Army.

"In addition to ensuring that vehicles protect their occupants during an explosive event, it is also important to ensure that the vehicle is able to operate under the weight and stresses of additional armor," said ATC Commander Col. John P. Rooney. "The Churchville Test Area is a critical part of the automotive testing conducted before a vehicle is deployed."

Due to security restrictions, attendance is by invitation only. Media interested in covering this event should contact the APG Public Affairs Office, 410-278-1147 or 1153 to make arrangement for escorts.